



STUDIES IN SĀṂKHYA (II)*

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AHAṂKĀRA

Ahaṃkāra is one of those deceptive Indian concepts which retain a certain plausibility when translated into our thought and, as a result, are accepted at face value.[1] It arrives comparatively late on the scene of early speculation, if we go by the occurrences of the term in the extant texts. Almost invariably it is associated with terms suggestive or indicative of Sāṃkhya influence. The Sāṃkhya doctrine itself is still too often regarded as a rational system, ever since Garbe[2] described it so. All this has led scholars into believing that *ahaṃkāra* is a typical Sāṃkhya creation, a necessary hypothesis for the consistency of the doctrine, a deliberate rational construction.

Jacobi[3] defines *ahaṃkāra* as the principle "vermöge dessen wir uns für handelnd und leidend usw. halten, während wir selbst, d. h. unsere Seele davon ewig frei bleiben." Garbe[4] adds: "die Funktion des Ahaṃkāra ist also die Hervorbringung von Wahnvorstellungen (*abhimāna*), und zwar derjenigen Wahnvorstellungen, welche die Idee des Ich in rein materielle Dinge und Prozesse hineintragen." Frauwallner[5] writes: "das Ichbewusstsein (*ahaṃkāraḥ*) .. ist eine volkommene Neuschöpfung, zu der er [*sc.* the hypothetical Pañcaśikha] auf folgende Weise kam .. Wenn man alle psychischen Vorgänge in das Bereich der Materie verlegte und den psychischen Organen zuschrieb, dann konnte man auch die falschen Vorstellungen von Ich und Mein nicht der Seele lassen .. Entweder schrieb man sie einem der bereits gegebenen Organe zu, oder man nahm für sie ein neues Organ an .. Pañcaśikha .. nahm ein eigenes Organ an, das Ichbewusstsein (*ahaṃkāraḥ*)."

All these definitions and descriptions are true enough, as far as they go; but they do not go far enough. None of them really accounts for the most surprising aspect of this "philosophical" concept: its cosmic function of creator of the empirical universe. But why should the spirit's self-projection be equivalent to world creation? And, an important question, why should the self-projection be erroneous and illusory, but the identical world creation true and real?

Senart's comments[6] are still to the point: "Les interprètes, même occidentaux, des philosophèmes sāṃkhya prennent volontiers pour monnaie authentique, pour réflexion spontanée, toutes les combinaisons de la doctrine achevée en système." "A traiter les systèmes hindous, ainsi qu'il arrive communément, comme de purs produits de la réflexion raisonnante, pratiquant en parfaite maîtrise l'étude objective des problèmes, à les isoler des inspirations religieuses et des notions courantes qui ont guidé leurs premiers pas, à y supposer une logique serrée et, si j'ose dire, substantielle, dont la pensée hindoue se montre habituellement peu capable, on méconnait les conditions et on fausse les enchaînements de l'histoire."

Research into the genesis of a concept like *ahaṃkāra* is handicapped from the start by the assumption that at the end of the development MUST lie the complete and perfect doctrine.[7] Implicit is an evolutionist a priori. One does not at least reserve the possibility that the classical doctrine really represents a minority doctrine, remaining after the majority views had been dissolved in Vedānta and Pañcarātra, already moribund when formulated in the Kārikā, dead soon after.[8]

It is this attitude which made Margarethe

* See *JAOS*, LXXVI (1955), pp. 173 ff.

[1] Mbh. quotations are from the critical edition of Mokṣadharma in Śāntiparvan, ed. S. K. Belvalkar, fascc. 22-24 (Poona, 1951-53).

[2] Richard Garbe, *Die Sāṃkhya-Philosophie: Eine Darstellung des indischen Rationalismus*[2] (Leipzig, 1927).

[3] H. Jacobi, *Philosophische Monatshefte*, XIII, p. 420, quoted by Garbe, *o. c.*, p. 311.

[4] Garbe, *o. c.*, p. 311, after Kārikā 24; Sūtra 1, 72; 2, 16.

[5] Erich Frauwallner, *Geschichte der indischen Philosophie.* Band I (Salzburg, 1953), ch. 6, pp. 309-10.

[6] Emile Senart, "Rajas et la théorie indienne des trois guṇas," *J. As.*, 11me série, tome VI (1915), pp. 153; 164.

[7] Cf. Franklin Edgerton, "The Meaning of Sāṃkhya and Yoga," *AJP*, XLV (1924), p. 6.

[8] Cf. Frauwallner, *o. c.*, p. 475.

Steiner's little paper,[9] "Ahaṃkāra in den älteren Upaniṣaden"—to my knowledge the only monograph dealing with the subject—so negative in its results. She set out to find in the upaniṣads the prototypes of the Sāṃkhyan *ahaṃkāra* "erroneous self-projection" before gaining an insight into the whole complex of the concept, and—second limitation—concentrated mainly on the occurrences of the term itself. So she arrived at the conclusion: "der Begriff *ahaṃkāra* ist in den Upaniṣaden derselbe wie bei Īśvarakṛṣṇa in seiner Sāṃkhya-Kārikā."[10] Considering these limitations it is clear that this conclusion cannot be right, that is, completely right.

In our present study we shall depart from the cosmic function of the *ahaṃkāra* in order to find out if the cosmogonical role of the notion allows of a satisfactory explication in the context of early speculations, and how it came to be associated with such ideas as erroneous self-projection of the spirit.

Let us first review the *ahaṃkāra* in the Kārikā. K. 13 declares that it is both a *prakṛti* or evolvent and a *vikṛti* or evolute; 22 that it is an evolute of the *mahān*. In 24-25 it is described as follows:

abhimāno 'haṃkāras tasmād dvividhaḥ pravartate sargaḥ /
ekādaśakaś ca guṇas tanmātraḥ pañcakaś caiva //
sāttvika ekādaśakaḥ pravartate vaikṛtād ahaṃkārāt /
bhūtādes tanmātraḥ sa tāmasas taijasād ubhayam //

'*Ahaṃkāra* is presumption. From it derives a twofold evolution: 1. the set of eleven; 2. the *tanmātra* set of five. The set of eleven, which is *sāttvika*, derives from the *vaikṛta ahaṃkāra*; the *tanmātra* set from the *bhūtādi*; both derive from the *taijasa*.'

What strikes us most in the Kārikā's description of world evolution is that there are two patterns, which we may call "vertical" and "horizontal." Down to the *ahaṃkāra* we have a vertical evolution: the *mahān* descends directly from the *pradhāna*, the *ahaṃkāra* directly from the *mahān*. From the *ahaṃkāra* on this pattern is abandoned: its evolution becomes a ramification. First it divides itself into three secondary *ahaṃkāras* which are all on the same plane; then these three divisions evolve two sets of plural products: the *vaikṛta* evolves the eleven senses, the *bhūtādi* the five *tanmātras*, the *taijasa* is somehow involved in both evolutions. Several points are obscure: What is the relation between the primary *ahaṃkāra* and the secondary ones? What is the chronological order, if any, of the *sāttvika* and *tāmasa* evolution? May we infer from the *sāttvika* and *tāmasa* evolutes congenial evolvents and are we to understand that the *vaikṛta* is the *sāttvika ahaṃkāra*, the *bhūtādi* the *tāmasa* one? What, then, is the role of *taijasa* and why are there no *taijasa* i. e. *rājasa* evolutes? and how can the *rajas* of the *taijasa* be partly the cause of wholly *sāttvika* and wholly *tāmasa* products? These questions can be reduced to two: why the horizontal pattern and why the guṇas which nowhere else figure in evolution? So much is evident that the function of the *ahaṃkāra* in the evolution process is much more complicated than those of *pradhāna* and *mahān*. By itself it creates the whole phenomenal world, not in successive evolutions, but immediately; it is the father of the world but its ways are mysterious.

No less mysterious is its name. It is currently translated literally as "I-maker" or the like, whereby is obviously meant 'organ which forms the conception of the ego.' But this rendering is not without its difficulties: if this had been the intended meaning when the term was coined, one wonders why the responsible thinker, capable of such conceptual thought, did not express himself more accurately in *ahaṃtā-kāra*. Besides, °*kāra* has as a rule the much more concrete sense of 'fashioning, building, making and doing with one's hands.'

Again, this philosophical concept carries unexpected mythological associations: it is identified with Brahmā and, more frequently, with Brahmā's predecessor Prajāpati in the Mokṣadharma portions of the Mahābhārata.[11] It is true that the sections where this identification is made are comparatively recent; but this holds equally for the introduction of *ahaṃkāra* itself. It must be repeated that the fact of later occurrence is never proof of modernity: the milieux from which these "later" notions hail may have been more conservative and old-fashioned, or less given to broadcasting their views, or simply unlucky in the preservation of their texts. So if similar identifications

[9] In *Festgabe Garbe, Aus Indiens Kultur* (Erlangen, 1927), pp. 109 ff.

[10] *O. c.*, p. 114.

[11] MBh. 12, 175, 16; 291, 20; 299, 7; 300, 12.

are more frequently made in mythologizing or theistic texts which elaborate supposedly "pure" Sāṃkhya notions in a theistic spirit, this does not mean that *ahaṃkāra* had not carried such associations from ancient times. We may note that especially *ahaṃkāra* carries them, even there where the other principles are not so elaborated. And is there any reason to suppose that Sāṃkhya was originally innocent of theism? Edgerton [12] has shown the contrary. Theistic associations abound from the beginning. MBh. 12, 211, 9 identifies Kapila, the mythical founder of Saṃkhya, with Prajāpati, reminiscent of ŚvetUp. 5, 2 where Kapila, first engendered (*kapilam .. agre .. jāyamānam*) is Hiraṇyagarbha. Arāḍa's Sāṃkhya can hardly be described as theistic; yet it equals Kapila with *buddhi* and Prajāpati with *ahaṃkāra*.[13] It has been remarked that the relation between Pañcarātra and theistic "elaborations" of Sāṃkhya is close; Pañcarātra emerges suddenly as a fairly complete system: how long does their relation date back before we have documentary evidence? [14] These considerations have led us straight into the Mokṣadharma; and in this random collection of texts from many different milieux and schools we find that attention is centered, not on the psychological function of ahaṃkāra in the individual spirit, but on its evolutionary function in the process of world creation. It appears that we have grounds enough to concentrate on this latter function and not to exclude from the start the mythological associations as being secondary elaborations.

We have seen that the current translation of *ahaṃkāra*- is not without its difficulties. But there is another explanation which so far as been overlooked. Side by side with *ahaṃkāra* we find in later texts *mamakāra*. Explications of *ahaṃkāra* take always the form of a quoted sentence with *iti*: 'I am .. I do ..' etc.; of *mamakāra*: 'This is mine' etc. This points to another meaning of °*kāra*, not as in *kumbhakāra* etc., but as in *oṃkāra*, *vaṣaṭkāra*, *svāhākāra* etc.: 'the cry, uttering or ejaculation: *Aham*!'

I do indeed believe that this interpretation of *ahaṃkāra* explains the creator's part which this principle plays in proto-Sāṃkhyan evolution doctrines. For the 'cry: *Aham*!' as factor of world creation reminds one instantly of the many passages in brāhmaṇas and upaniṣads where an original being, when about to create, cries out: "*Aham* ...! *hantāham*...!" Perhaps the clearest instance is found in BĀUp. 1, 4, 1: *ātmaivedam agra āsīt puruṣavidhaḥ / so 'nuvīkṣya nānyad ātmano 'paśyat / so 'ham asmīty agre vyāharat / tato ahaṃnāmābhavat*: 'the self was here alone in the beginning in the form of a man. He looked around and saw nothing but himself: and he cried out at the beginning: "Here am *I*." That is how the name *I* came to be.' The creative power of this crying-out, this formulating is shown in MaitrUp. 6, 6 *athāvyāhṛtaṃ vā idam āsīt / sa satyaṃ prajāpatis tapas taptvānuvyāharad bhūr bhuvaḥ svar iti / eṣaivasya prajāpateḥ staviṣṭhā tanūr yā lokavatīti*: 'This here was yet unformulated; the real-beyond, Prajāpati, performed *tapas* and then formulated one after the other: "Earth, Sky, Heaven." This is the most solid body of Prajāpati, which consists in the world.' The verb used in both cases is *vyā-hṛ*, used for the ritual, magically powerful cry, or formulation, of the priest. That in our BĀUp. myth the self-formulation, the *ahaṃnāman*: 'Here am I,' is really the beginning, nay the condition of creation becomes clear from the sequel: *so 'vet—ahaṃ vāva sṛṣṭir asmy ahaṃ hīdaṃ sarvam asṛkṣīti / tataḥ sṛṣṭir abhavat*: 'He knew: "*I* am creation, for *I* have created all this." That is how creation came to be.' The parallelism of 4, 1 and 4, 5; 6; 7, with the practical applications following the description of Man's exploits, shows their unity to be closer than that of 2-4 which interrupt this parallelism. 4, 5 follows naturally on 4, 1; 4, 7 on 4, 5: *tad dhedaṃ tarhy avyākṛtam āsīt / tan nāmarūpābhyām eva vyākriyate — asau nāma — ayam idamrūpa iti / .. / sa eṣa iha praviṣṭa ā nakhāgrebhyaḥ*: 'this here was then still unseparated; it was separated as names and forms—"this one is name, he has this form"; he entered into this here down to the nail-tops.' He is the Man *ātmā puruṣavidhaḥ*, whose name is *I* and whose form is CREATION.

The speculations on creation-by-naming are already old [15] in that period, and in a state of

[12] *O. c.*, pp. 7 ff.

[13] Aśvaghoṣa, Buddhacarita I ed. (Calcutta, 1933), II trsl. (ib., 1936), by E. H. Johnston; reference is to 12, 21 and the translator's note.

[14] For *ahaṃkāra* in "systematic" Pañcarātra, see F. O. Schrader, *Introduction to the Pāñcarātra* (Adyar, 1916), pp. 75 ff.

[15] For a rather apodictical but thought-provoking dis-

transition. An older form is that of TāṇḍyaMBr. 20, 14, 2 which reads: "Prajāpati was here alone. He became Vāc. Vāc became his partner. He wished: 'I will send out this Vāc and it will go and unfold the whole world.' So he sent out Vāc and it went and unfolded all this." A parallel in KāṭhBr. 12, 5 has: "Prajāpati was here. Vāc was his partner. He copulated with her. Thereafter she parted and bore these creatures, then she returned into Prajāpati." Vāc is the self-formulation of Prajāpati, personified in a female partner who brings forth the creatures, that is, formulates them, literally CALLS them into being. Prajāpati may be unformulated (ŚatBr. 1, 1, 1, 13; 1, 6, 1, 20) but is also both formulated and unformulated, measured and unmeasured (ib. 6, 5, 3, 7), as name and as form. In BĀUp. 1, 4, 3—to return to our basic text—we read that the "self as a male" wants to sport but has no partner to sport with; so he desires a partner, and it is said: "He was as big as a man and a woman embracing." This androgynous entity is split into two: they are husband and wife.

It is against this background that we have to view the simple cry: "Here am I." An original being, at first unformulated, formulates himself; this self-formulation is Vāc, from whom creation proceeds further: in other words, this self-formulation is world creation. That the female partner of our version still corresponds to the more ancient Vāc becomes clear from another parallel version. In the creation myth BĀUp. 1, 2, 1 = ŚatBr. 10, 6, 5, 1, an original being Nothing, or Hunger, or Death—one would paraphrase "the One-without, the INCOMPLETE one—desires to become himself: *tan mano 'kuruta-ātmanvī syām iti.* Follow several creation stories: one of the primordial waters; one of creation by tripartition; and one where this being desires: "Let there be a second self to me." This second self is a "son."[16] The way in which this "second self" is produced is interesting: *sa manasā vācaṃ mithunaṃ samabhavad aśanāyā mṛtyuḥ* 'by means of his desire[17] he—hunger, death—copulated with Vāc.' The discharge of semen becomes the year:[18] the year is his second self, his "son." He himself bears his offspring for a year, then when it is born, he prepares to eat it, opens his mouth, emits the sound *bhāṇ* while doing so, and so Vāc comes to be. The Vāc with whom he copulated was consequently yet unuttered, still within him. The story continues (2, 5): *sa aikṣata-yadi vā imam abhimaṃsye kanīyo 'nnaṃ kariṣya iti / sa tayā vācā tenātmanedaṃ sarvam asṛjata yad idaṃ kiṃ ca* 'he wished: "If I use my will[19] on him (i. e. the year), I shall make a little food." So by means of Vāc he created with that self all, whatever there is.' The point of the story is that Hunger wants food; hence his offspring is the year which in its three seasons of summer, rains and harvest produces crop. Vāc appears twice, both times unnecessarily it would seem: a relic of her former importance in the process of creation by formulation. If here she is evidently already on the decline, she is even more so in our basic version 1, 4, 1—a mere female partner, anonymous—, and still more in another version (4, 10) *brahma vā idam agra āsīt / tad ātmānam evāvet—ahaṃ brahmāsi / tasmāt tat sarvam abhavat* 'the *brahman* was here in the beginning; it knew only itself: "I am *brahman*"; therefrom this all came to be.' Here it is the fact of self-recognition which is the condition of creation. If this last version ignores the female partner, the rudimentary Vāc, by implication, still another version ignores here explicitly: (ChUp. 6, 2) *sad eva somyedam agra āsīd ekam evādvitīyam* 'the *sat* was here in the beginning, alone and WITHOUT A PARTNER.' This sat first produces *tejas*, then the waters, then food. As I have set forth elsewhere,[20] these three "elements" represent the three seasons, summer, rains and harvest; together they constitute the Year, the second self of our version in BĀUp. 1, 2, 1: hence that after food has been produced the *sat* starts creation: *seyaṃ devataikṣata — hantāham imās tisro devatā anena jīvenātmanānupraviśya nāmarūpe vyākaravāṇīti* 'This deity wished: "Why, I will now enter these three deities (*tejas*, the waters

cussion see Maryla Falk, *Nāmarūpa and Dharmarūpa* (Calcutta, 1947), esp. ch. 1; her important *Il mito psicologico nell'India antica* was not accessible to me.

[16] In the sense that it is the product of Hunger; but the very expression "second self" shows that it is intended as a self-creation, a self-manifestation.

[17] In these creation myths *manas* has regularly the sense of 'will,' rather than of 'mind' (always a makeshift); cf. above *mano 'kuruta* = *akāmayata* = *aikṣata.*

[18] *tad yad reta āsīt sa saṃvatsaro 'bhavat*; undoubtedly a direct symbolism of seminal flood and rains is intended.

[19] That the only occurrence of *abhi-man* in the older upaniṣads is in just this context is certainly significant.

[20] In *Rāmānuja's Vedārthasaṃgraha* (Poona, 1956), Intr., ch. I.

and food) as a living being myself and separate names and forms."' In this creation, too, we can discern the self-creation of *sat* which is completed with its entrance into its three constituent "elements": the SECOND self above is the LIVING self, the unmanifest becomes the manifest. The unique, self-sufficient *sat* starts creation all by itself. Nevertheless, in spite of the explicit rejection of a partner, there are still traces of the ancient *vāc* in the famous formula *vācārambhaṇaṃ vikāro nāmadheyam*, as I hope to have proved elsewhere.[21]

Is it a far cry from the Sāṃkhyan *ahaṃkāra* to this ancient complex of myths where creation starts from, or even consists in, the self-formulation of an original, unformulated and unformed being? It may seem so if we concentrate exclusively on the more advanced philosophical aspects of *ahaṃkāra* as the self-projection of the individual spirit; but when we start from the cosmic *ahaṃkāra* it does not. It has been remarked [22] that the cosmic *ahaṃkāra* can only be understood if there is a cosmic personality. There will be no one at present who seriously doubts that Sāṃkhya began by being theistic, in other words, by positing a cosmic person whose self-creation took place in a series of evolutions, one of which—and the most important for world creation—was *ahaṃkāra*.

When we sum up our results we can state our position as follows. We find the beginnings of the concept of *ahaṃkāra* in the older upaniṣads, in this form: at the beginning of creation a primordial being becomes conscious of himself, formulates himself, creates himself; these three distinctions do not really exist: consciousness-formulation-creation is actually one single process. We see that the creation myths where we found this origin of *ahaṃkāra* continue more ancient speculations where the creator's formulation Vāc was projected and personified in a female partner, wife of the creator and progenitrix of creation. This projection is withdrawn and the function of Vāc, who is contained within the creator, taken over by the creator, a process that reaches its climax in the sadvidyā of ChUp. 6. The *ahaṃkāra* is the *ahaṃnāman*, the NAME *I*, by which the creator formulates himself, and to which automatically corresponds a FORM in which the I is embodied. Hence it is said: *Ahaṃ vāva sṛṣṭir asmi* 'I am creation.' The further creation is described in several ways: by copulation with a female partner who is split off by the creator and in whom we recognize a rudimentary Vāc; by tripartition; and/or by separating-out (*vyā-kṛ/ vi-kṛ*) names and forms. In several passages the self-creation of the creator is described as his entering into his creation as his body. We started on the interpretation *ahaṃkāra* 'the ejaculation: *Aham*!; self-formulation'; but the difference between formulation and creation, obvious to us, does not really exist in this train of thought: formulation IS formation; name and form are inseparable. As far as we can see, no distinction is made between macrocosmos and microcosmos: the self-formulated being is the cosmos. Nor is there yet evidence of a deprecation of his self-creation.

In this context of speculations we are no longer surprised to meet the term *ahaṃkāra* itself, for the first time, in ChUp. 7, 15. There it is on a par with such universal concepts as *bhūman* 'vastness, infinitude' and *ātman*; it is used to describe the all-comprising totality of things, the universe: *athāto 'haṃkārādeśa eva—aham evādhastād aham upariṣṭhād ahaṃ paścād ahaṃ purastād ahaṃ dakṣiṇato 'ham uttarato 'ham evedaṃ sarvam iti* 'so now the doctrine of the *ahaṃkāra*: "I am in the nadir, in the zenith, in the West, in the East, in the South, in the North, I am all that is here."' Miss Steiner discusses this passage and states that in all likelihood it is a later interpolation, because it stands isolated in the train of thought of this upaniṣad.[23] But we may ask: if anyone wanted to interpolate this passage, why should he choose *ahaṃkāra* of all possible notions, which, as Miss Steiner sets out to prove, would have had the same content as in the Kārikā? There is often some confused thinking about interpolations. In cases like this to wish to eliminate interpolations is to wish to eliminate complications. And even there where it can be made plausible, for example by comparing parallel passages, that a certain passage has been interpolated, we have no right to eliminate it, unless we can determine its date accurately and unless we can show definitely that the idea conveyed by it is entirely foreign to the "original" thought. One should rather go to the limit in

[21] In "Vācārambhaṇam," *Suniti Kumar Chatterji Jubilee Volume* = *Indian Linguistics*, XVI (Poona, 1955), pp. 157 ff.

[22] A. B. Keith, *The Sāṃkhya System* (London, no date), p. 80.

[23] *O. c.*, p. 111.

accepting such passages, both in order not to shut out complications and also because they are evidence. Every concept of early speculations grows more complex with every step in our researches. A genuine interpolation may be an aid to understand it better. In studying upaniṣadic thought we are never dealing with monolithic doctrines. To eliminate later portions is to throw evidence away that has to be explained: what it means, why it was inserted.

In our interpretation we can account perfectly for this *ahaṃkāra: aham evedaṃ sarvam* is *ahaṃ vāva sṛṣṭir asmi.* The universal character of the *ahaṃkāra* is given from the beginning; it cannot be anything but universal for it is the *ahaṃkāra* of the primordial being who creates by it the universe; it is not only the beginning of creation, it is its content.

Miss Steiner's argument that *ahaṃkāra* does not fit, because it would have fitted in 8, 7—where the difference between "false" and "true" *ātman* is set forth—but does not occur there, is hardly conclusive; but it poses the problem of the "reality" of the creation-by-*ahaṃkāra*. We declared that no distinction is made between microcosmos and macrocosmos, and that there is no evidence of any deprecation of creation. Ronald Smith,[24] however, in discussing some of our BĀUp. passages, states: "Any identification of micro- and macrocosm must imply a theory of illusion and projection by the mind, an idealism, and in India as anywhere else, it has to overcome the common sense of the unimaginative. This is usually a matter of time, as their case goes by default in the intellectual world by their [the world's?] uninterest." I do not quite see how this author arrives at his view: for, to put it also aprioristically, it seems more reasonable to expect that only after the macrocosmos—including the ultimate cause of things—and the microcosmos —including ego and body—have become separated, THEN there is any need for an illusion theory to account, not for their identification, but their separation.

This question has a direct bearing on our topic, for the complex concept of *ahaṃkāra* does not only comprehend the process of cosmic creation but includes the process of erroneous self-projection as well. The illusion of this self-projection does not involve the reality of the creation, only the spirit's identification with it. This point has been enlarged upon in classical Sāṃkhya, that is in an age when a plurality of individual spirits had been assumed and creation no longer started from the spirit but from a non-spiritual matrix. The doctrine is that the spirit, really not involved in the world, becomes involved in it by *abhimāna*, the erroneous presumption that it is the empirical ego in the body and material world. When we transpose this doctrine into the upaniṣadic complex of speculations around the prototype of *ahaṃkāra*, we may describe it as follows: there is no STRICT identity of the original being and his creation. Is there any evidence of a development of the *ahaṃkāra* conception, as we have come to understand it in the older upaniṣads, towards the notion of "degradation" of the original being in his creation?

At the earlier stages there is none: on the contrary, there are suggestions that the original being is originally incomplete and completes himself in creation, as in BĀUp. 1, 4, 17 *ātmaivedam agra āsid eka eva / so 'kāmayata — jāyā me syād atha prajāyeyātha vittaṃ me syād atha karma kurvīyeti / etāvān vai kāmo necchaṃś ca nāto bhūyo vindet .. so yāvad apy eteṣām ekaikaṃ na prāpnoty akṛtsna eva tāvan manyate / tasya kṛtsnatā — mana evāsyātmā vāg jāyā* etc. 'the self was here in the beginning, alone; he wished: "I would have a wife, and have children, and be rich, and do work." This is all there is to wish: whatever one desires, there is nothing more to find than that .. As long as he has not got them all, one after the other, so long he will feel INCOMPLETE. His completeness: his will (*manas*) is his *ātman*, his wife *vāc* etc.' The story of Hunger, creating to have food, points also at completion through creation.

In the most advanced version of our myth, the sadvidyā ChUp. 6, a change announces itself. In that celebrated śruti it is repeatedly said that the products which evolve (AFTER the *sat* has completed its self-creation by entering into its three constituents and separating names and forms) are *vācārambhaṇaṃ vikāro nāmadheyam.* Although this description has no pejorative value in itself, the sequel shows that primacy is given to *sat*, the *aṇimā* from which all derives and by which all is ensouled, and that a return is conceived which has its end, its AIM, in *sat.* This primacy of the un-

[24] Ronald M. Smith, "Birth of Thought II: Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad," *Annals Bhandarkar O. R. I.*, XXXIV (1953; Poona, 1954), p. 57.

evolved *sat,* the one before and beyond creation, shows marked affinities with that voiced in another famous śruti, BĀUp. 2, 3, 6 *athāta ādeśo — neti neti / na hy etasmād iti nety anyat param asti / atha nāmadheyaṃ satyasya satyam iti / prāṇa vai satyaṃ teṣām eṣa satyam* 'hence the instruction: "NOT, NOT": (that means:) there is NOT, repeat NOT, anything higher than he. So (the instruction:) "the true of the true is the Name" (that means): he is more true than the true, *sc.* the *prāṇas.*' The pronoun HE refers to the *puruṣa* whose FORM was described by various comparisons in the preceding lines, and whose NAME is now revealed as "true of the true," i.e. "truest of all." To the *prāṇas,* which, microcosmically, form his *amūrta* 'unsolid' form and are "true" but less true than he is, correspond macrocosmically the "unsolid" wind and sky. But just as the *puruṣa's* name is truer than the *prāṇas,* so his form is higher than that *amūrta* form of wind and sky. His form is beyond the sky; hence it is described in terms of bright, i.e. sun-like, objects, like *māhārajanaṃ vāsaḥ, pāṇḍvāvika, indragopa* 'firefly,' *agnyarcis, puṇḍarīka* 'lotus symbolizing the sun,' *sakṛdvidyutta*; for the sun and the like are beyond the sky. Does it signify anything that the *puruṣa's* FORM is described under his macrocosmic aspect and his NAME under his microcosmic aspect? It implies the identity alike of microcosmos and macrocosmos and of name and form. I do not think with Smith that wind and sky are "an approach to express the immaterial";[25] *amūrta* is not immaterial, but 'unsolid.' That the light-giving objects express it, would seem more probable; but here again it is not the immateriality of light and bright objects which is the *tertium comparationis,* but their transcendence.

It is within this context, I think, that we are to account for the introduction into our creation myth of the notion of the greater, transcendent TRUTH, the greater reality of the UNEVOLVED creator, whose significance is no longer that he creates and completes himself in his creation, his self-creation, but just that he is the One-before, the One-beyond the universe. Therefore I would be hesitant[26] to quote such passages[27] as BĀUp. 4, 3, 20: *atha yatrainaṃ ghnantīva jinantīva hastīva vicchāyayati gartam iva patati yad eva jāgrad bhayaṃ paśyati tad atrāvidyayā manyate / atha yatra deva iva rājeva — aham evedaṃ sarvo 'smīti manyate so 'sya paramo lokaḥ,* and 4, 3, 10 *na tatra rathā na rathayogā na panthāno bhavanti / atha rathān rathayogān pathaḥ sṛjate .. sa hi kartā* 'when it seems as if they beat him, rob him, as if an elephant threatens him, as if he falls down a well, whatever he considers dangerous when he is awake, all that he imagines in ignorance; when it seems to him that he is a god, a king, or "I am this, I am all," that is his sublime world," and "there are no carts, nor bullocks, nor roads: he creates carts and bullocks and roads .. for he is the one who makes them." The context is different from that of our creation myths: these are the fancies of an individual, not the world creation of the supreme One.

Once attention is no longer focused on the original being as the creator, but as the one behind, and before, and beyond creation, he gradually withdraws completely beyond his creation. Creation itself assumes a new autonomy—or, in so far as we recognize in it the female element of progenitrix, we may say it resumes its old autonomy. So ŚvetUp. 4, 5, with a deliberate and corrective reference to the sadvidyā ChUp. 6, declares that the unborn male copulates with the unborn female which produces the red, white and black elements —the old view of a partner against which Uddālaka had reacted.

It is always difficult to prove one's case by calling on the upaniṣads as witnesses: they are at once too willing and too evasive. But I hope to have made it abundantly clear that the origin of the creative *ahaṃkāra* must be sought in the ancient upaniṣadic speculations on a self-formulating, self-creating primordial personality. When we follow up the creation myths where such an original person, called Prajāpati, or *ātman,* or *puruṣa,* even *brahman* and *sat,* recognizes, formulates and creates himself, the associations of the texts themselves point the way naturally. In passing we note

[25] *O. c.,* p. 61.

[26] I do not deny, in fact consider it very likely, that the same tendency that has found expression in the quoted and similar passages is responsible for the gradual devaluation of the universe as the creator's body and the exultation of the creator as transcending the universe; but the identity of macrocosmos and microcosmos in the creator's person requires that the effects of this tendency be directly shown in the context of creation.

[27] As cited by Miss Steiner, *o. c.,* p. 110, as the upaniṣadic prototype of *ahaṃkāra* in her exclusive sense of 'erroneous self-projection of the individual.'

such familiar terms as *ātman, puruṣa, prajāpati, manas, vyākāra, vikāra,* possibly *abhimāna,* creation by tripartition, three constituents—encouraging landmarks—until we arrive at the ŚvetUp. where we find the most modern upaniṣadic affinities with the doctrine of classical Sāṃkhya and where the term *ahaṃkāra* has evidently become already a terminus technicus and occurs in from now on permanent surroundings.

It is difficult to bridge the distance between the age when *ahaṃkāra* was just one other concept in the whole complex of notions surrounding the *puruṣa* creator of the world, and the age when it has become a technical term in a clearly Sāṃkhyan context. That a purposeful thinker got hold of it again, after it had fallen into desuetude is of course not impossible. But considering the fact that when *ahaṃkāra* starts to occur again in the epic it brings along brahmaistic notions and carries mythological or theistic associations, I think it more probable that it had never been lost in circles which developed the upaniṣadic doctrines without broadcasting their views too widely at first.

We shall pass by the younger upaniṣads where the term occurs but the context does not enable us to assess its significance, and return to the Mokṣadharma.[28] We have seen that the classical doctrine of the creative *ahaṃkāra* displays certain obscurities which may be reduced to two problems, that of the "horizontal" evolution pattern and that of the evolutionary function of the guṇas. On studying the texts we find that these two are really one problem.

When we read through the Mokṣadharma we are struck by the fact that there is hardly any relation between the triad *sattva, rajas* and *tamas,* and *ahaṃkāra.* In a previous study[29] we have shown that there is scanty but conclusive evidence that the triad at one time played a decisive part in the evolution of the world. It is likely that this function is an ancient one: the evidence is found in Mokṣadharma sections which are generally admitted to belong to the oldest stratum; the references and descriptions where the triad has this function are more often than not corrupted and misunderstood; they are limited in number and no progressive unfolding[30] of the theory, which would show its vitality, is evidenced. In fact, at exactly the same moment when we watch the evolutionary, guṇa-influenced *bhāvas* disappear, we see the "psychical" *bhāvas* appear: the members of the triad are here static conditioning factors of the *buddhi's* inner emotional life.

What is the relation between these two sets of *bhāvas?* Our material is limited and does not allow of the smooth explanation that one set attracted the other. We note in the text which we have reconstituted that the *buddhi* of the *puruṣa* is the SOLE principle involved in evolution. It is not a vertical, but a horizontal pattern: not *buddhi* into *manas, manas* into senses etc., but *buddhi* into *manas, buddhi* into senses. And, we may assume, also *buddhi* into elements; this last evolution is not directly given in our text, which shows a lacuna just after saying that the *buddhi* evolves something else out of each of the five senses, but the deduction is legitimate.[30a] From the fact that *rajas* is said to condition the *buddhi* into evolving the senses we may infer that *sattva* and *tamas* also figure, in this way that *sattva* is the factor impelling the *buddhi* to evolve the *manas, tamas* its factor for the elements. In one breath with this evolution effected by the triad is described another function of the triad in conditioning certain sensations of the *buddhi*: the triple *vedanā*: *sāttvika*—pleasure; *rājasa*—misery; *tāmasa*—daze, bewilderment. Under these three heads a number of emotions are grouped (187, 28-35). Although the two sets of *bhāvas,* one of evolutionary phases, one of emotional states, can be distinguished, they should not be separated too sharply from each other. They may quite well complement each other, the first set being states of "external" development of the *buddhi,* the second set states of "internal" development.

Why did the first set gradually disappear? We see that already in the same text (187) the horizontal evolution of the *buddhi* in *bhāvas* is accompanied by a different cosmic inventory of five

[28] The term *ahaṃkāra* in the younger upaniṣads and its general position in the Mokṣadharma have been discussed ably by E. H. Johnston, *Early Sāṃkhya* (London, 1937), to which I refer the reader.

[29] *JAOS*, LXXVI (1956), pp. 173 ff.

[30] If we except 12, 206 discussed below.

[30a] On second thought I am inclined to be more positive about *aṇu* in the line *indriyāṇāṃ pṛthagbhāvād buddhir vikurute hy aṇu, JAOS,* LXXVI (1956), p. 155, śloka 6; one is reminded of the elemental atoms in Vaiśeṣika.

bhūtas, manas the sixth, *buddhi* the seventh, *kṣetrajña* the eighth. The *bhūtas* of this description are primary evolvents: from *ākāśa* spring sound, hearing and the skies. It is clear that this pattern is altogether different. It is still doubtful whether this series of eight evolvents or *prakṛtis* is already conceived as an evolution series. But the same is evident in another series of eight *prakṛtis*, apparently built on the former: *buddhi* → *ahaṃkāra* → *manas* → *ākāśa* → wind → fire → water → earth; the *kṣetrajña* belongs now in a separate category. It is this vertical pattern which has caught on and replaced the horizontal pattern of the *bhāvas* of the buddhi. We note that the *ahaṃkāra* belongs regularly to this pattern, and that the guṇas do not take any part in the evolution according to this pattern.

There is one exception, and the passage concerned is interesting. Here, in 12, 206, *rajas* returns in a role strongly reminiscent of its evolutionary function. In 12 it is said that '*rajas* is cast about in *tamas* and *sattva* rests on *rajas*, and *avyakta*, being the seat of consciousness (*jñānādhiṣṭhānam*) is characterized by *buddhi* and *ahaṃkāra*.' This is probably one of the oldest epic mentions of *ahaṃkāra*. Then 15 reads:

karmaṇā bījabhūtena codyate yad yad indriyam /
jāyate tad ahaṃkārād rāgayuktena cetasā //

'each sense successively, being impelled by *karman* which is the seed, originates from *ahaṃkāra* under influence of the *cetas* which is coupled with *rāga*.'

The meaning of *rāga* becomes clear from 9:

rajasy antarhitā mūrtir indriyāṇāṃ sanātanī /

'the eternal embodiment (= manifestation) of the senses is concealed in (has its origin and end in) the *rajas*'; and from 20

indriyāṇāṃ rajasy eva prabhavapralayāv ubhau /

'the senses have in the *rajas* alone their origin and dissolution.' It is evident that *rāga* in 15 represents *rajas* of 9 and 20; but it must be noted that *rajas/rāga* is in 15 an emotional state of the *buddhi*. This shows us how very close the two sets of *bhāvas* are: occasionally they might coincide. When we compare the function of the *rajas* in the evolution of *buddhi* into senses, we cannot doubt that here the same evolution is alluded to, that *rajas* is consequently a factor in evolution and works through the *rāgayukta cetas*, i. e. the *buddhi* influenced by *rajas* and in a state of passionate activity. But there is an important variation: the *buddhi* does not evolve the senses directly but out of *ahaṃkāra*.

In this only, isolated instance where *ahaṃkāra* is associated with *rajas* as a factor of evolution we observe that at the basis is a primary connexion of *rajas* with the *buddhi*; in other words, fundamental is our other "horizontal" evolution pattern into which *ahaṃkāra* has been fitted. As we said, regularly *ahaṃkāra* belongs in the "vertical" one. On the little evidence we have we must conclude that the introduction of *ahaṃkāra* here is secondary, and vice versa that the introduction of the triad *sattva, rajas* and *tamas* into the pattern represented by *ahaṃkāra* is likewise secondary. In this instance both patterns coalesce partially.

Not only do we infer that the association between the evolving factors, the guṇas, and the evolvent *ahaṃkāra* is secondary, but there is also evidence to show that their SYSTEMATIC association, as we find it in the Kārikā, is comparatively late.

In the system of the Kārikā the hierarchy of the products of *ahaṃkāra* is: first senses and *manas*, which are *sāttvika*, and second the *tanmātra* which comprises the *bhūtas* and is *tāmasa*. But the more original doctrine reverses these positions: the senses are products of the *bhūtas*. Rāmānuja sums up the situation accurately when he states that in the Mahābhārata the senses are *bhautika*.[31] In fact, I believe that the terminology of the Kārikā itself bears traces of this older order: *bhūtas* → senses. The three aspects under which the *ahaṃkāra* evolves the two sets of eleven senses and five tanmātras have special names of apparent antiquity: *vaikṛta, taijasa* and *bhūtādi*, in the order of the Kārikā. *Bhūtādi* is the most transparent term: it is clearly a synonym or an epithet of the *ahaṃkāra* as the originator of the *bhūtas*.[32] *Vaikṛta*, also *vaikārika*, and *taijasa* are more difficult.

Strauss[33] argues that *vaikṛta* means the *ahaṃ*-

[31] My ed. *Rāmānuja's Vedārthasaṃgraha* 57; cf. also Frauwallner, "Untersuchungen zum Mokṣadharma I: Die nichtsāṃkhyistischen Texte," *JAOS*, XLIV (1925), pp. 63 ff.

[32] Otto Strauss, "Zur Geschichte des Sāṃkhya," *WZKM*, XXVII (1913), pp. 260 f., but in this function the *ahaṃkāra* may have succeeded another principle, e. g. *ākāśa*.

[33] *O. c.*, p. 260.

kāra as the *vikṛti* of the *buddhi* which itself is a *vikṛti* of the *pradhāna.* This would make the term another epithet; but it is not just the *ahaṃkāra* by itself which is called *vaikṛta,* but the *ahaṃkāra* AS THE ORIGINATOR OF THE SENSES: the senses specify the *ahaṃkāra* as *vaikṛta.* We may compare MBh. 12, 291, 23 (B. 300, 24), a relatively recent text, where *vaikṛta* occurs after the evolution has been described of *brahmā* → *mahān* (= Hiraṇyagarbha = *buddhi*) → *ahaṃkāra* (= Prajāpati *ahaṃkṛta*); this typically "vertical" evolution continues:

bhūtasargam ahaṃkārāt tṛtīyaṃ viddhi pārthiva /
ahaṃkāreṣu sarveṣu caturthaṃ viddhi vaikṛtam //

'the third evolution is that of the *bhūtas* from the *ahaṃkāra*; the fourth evolution, the *vaikṛta,* takes place within all these products of the *ahaṃkāra* (i. e. the *bhūtas*).' From the sequel it may be gathered that the *ahaṃkāra*-born *bhūtas* are the *mahābhūtas* and that the *vaikṛta* evolution is that of the correlated objects or *viśeṣas,* sound, colour etc.: AT THE SAME TIME originate the ten senses. In other words, the senses go with the *viśeṣas* of the elements and constitute together the *vaikṛta* evolution, deriving from the elements which are the *vikṛti* of the *ahaṃkāra*: senses and *viśeṣas* form the secondary evolution of the *ahaṃkāra.* Not without interest is another text, MBh. 12, 337, 63-73. Here three classes of human beings are described: the first is *sāttvika,* the second *vyāmiśra,* i. e. *rājasa* and *tāmasa* with a redeeming admixture of *sattva,* the third *vaikārika* 'twice degraded,' *rājasa* and *tāmasa* without any *sattva.* This special use of *vaikārika* opens our eyes to the unexpectedness of the equation *sāttvika ahaṃkāra* = *vaikārika ahaṃkāra.*

If we are therefore right in accepting *vaikṛta* as "product of the *vikṛti* (*bhūtas*) of the *ahaṃkāra,*" consequently as a term for the fourth creation, the senses,[34] it follows that the Kārikā reflects in its terminology an order or hierarchy contrary to its professed one: *ahaṃkāra* = *bhūtādi* → *bhūtas* (*vikṛti* of *ahaṃkāra*) → senses (*vikṛti* of a *vikṛti*:) *vaikṛta,* a typically vertical pattern which has become horizontal: *ahaṃkāra* = *sāttvika/vaikṛta* → senses; = *tāmasa/bhūtādi* → *tanmātra* (elements/ *viśeṣas*). By the introduction of guṇa qualifications three changes have been effected: the vertical pattern has become horizontal; the order objects—senses has been reversed; a tripartition of *sāttvika, rājasa* and *tāmasa* replaces the evolution in two degrees: *vikṛti* → *vaikṛta.*

We can account in several ways for the introduction of the guṇa qualifications, which as far as I can see is peculiar to the Kārikā It may be a result of systematization: after the example of *pradhāna* and *buddhi* the *ahaṃkāra* also got its three guṇas. But there may yet be lingering memories of the old triad as factors of evolution, which worked in what is the *ahaṃkāra*'s privileged field.[35] Still more ancient associations may be present: the *ahaṃkāra,* or its upaniṣadic prototype, occasionally started creation by tripartition.

The most difficult term to explain is *taijasa.* The old interpretation was built on the relation *taijasa* = *rājasa ahaṃkāra,* so that *taijasa* was rendered as 'energetic principle.' Now that we have seen that the relation of *ahaṃkāra* with the *guṇas* is secondary, a result of the coalescence of two evolution doctrines, we can no longer explain *taijasa* by *rājasa.* Besides, *taijasa* does not convey the meaning 'energetic like *rajas*'; it is a derivate of *tejas* 'light and its power of heating and glowing,' a concept that is very high up in the hierarchy of Indian notions; if we are to connect it with a *guṇa,* we would connect it with *sattva* rather than *rajas.*

The only *tejas* from which we can derive our *taijasa* is the first of the three constituents of sat in the sadvidyā ChUp. 6. This is of course highly conjectural. Still it may be argued that the guṇas of Sāṃkhya derive from such triads as that of the three forms (*rūpāṇi*), *tejas,* water and food, of just this upaniṣadic evolution myth.[36] Then there is the ancient evolution in which *sattva* would correspond to *manas, rajas* to the senses, and *tamas* (or its predecessor) to the elements. Could this *sāttvika manas* ever have been described as *taijasa*? And might not the term have been hanging around the whole complex of creation myths and evolution doctrines as one of the loose ends which all Indian thinkers are loath to cut off? It is a loose end in the Kārikā.

[34] Which in purāṇic Sāṃkhya are regularly called *vaikārika* themselves.

[35] From a historical point of view both explanations amount to the same thing, since the *ahaṃkāra* has "succeeded" the *buddhi* in its function of creator.

[36] Senart, *o. c.*, p. 151; I intend to return to this point in a further study on *sattva.*

Vijñānabhikṣu[37] knew, and preferred, an older doctrine which he tried to integrate in the Kārikā scheme: the *sāttvika* product is *manas*, the *rājasa* (*taijasa*) the senses, the *tāmasa* the *tanmātras*. In support he quotes an interesting smṛti:

vaikārikas taijasaś ca tāmasaś cety ahaṃ tridhā /
ahaṃtattvād vikurvāṇān mano vaikārikād abhūt //
vaikārikāś ca ye devā arthābhivyañjanaṃ yataḥ /
taijasād indriyāṇy eva jñānakarmamayāni ca //
tāmaso bhūtasūkṣmādir yataḥ khaṃ liṅgam ātmanaḥ /

'the ego is of three kinds, *vaikārika, taijasa and tāmasa*; the *manas* evolves from the *vaikārika*, i. e. the ego principle that is being modified (*vikurvāṇa-*); *vaikārika* are also the (superintending) deities (of the senses), from whom (arises) the manifestation of the objects. The senses themselves, both the sensorial and motorial, derive from the *taijasa*. The subtle cause of the elements is *tāmasa*, from which aether the subtle body of the *ātman*.' Though this is clearly an attempt to give a more satisfactory function to *taijasa*, yet it is clear that the explanation is somewhat forced. In order to retain the patently original *vaikārika* character of the senses (and the *manas* with which they are inseparably connected) and, at the same time, arrange them anew under *taijasa*, the senses are by way of compromise divided into the superintending deities and senses proper. The explanation of *vaikārika* as *vikurvāṇa* is unconvincing: it is obvious a product of *vikṛta* or *vikāra*.

[37] Sāṃkhyapravacanabhāṣya ad Sāṃkhyasūtra 2, 18.

A similar passage in Viṣṇu Purāṇa 1, 2, 46 f. reads:

bhūtatanmātrasargo 'yam ahaṃkārāt tu tāmasāt /
taijasānīndriyāṇy āhur devā vaikārikā daśa //
ekādaśaṃ manaś cātra devā vaikārikāḥ smṛtāḥ /

'the *tanmātras* and elements evolve from the *tāmasa ahaṃkāra*. The senses are said to be *taijasa*, their ten superintending deities being *vaikārika*; in that (division) the deities and the eleventh, the *manas*, are known as *vaikārika*.' Rāmānuja, discussing the passage in Vedārthasaṃgraha § 57, and followed by Viṣṇucitta in his VP. commentary, explains *deva* as 'sense' and renders: 'some contended that the senses are *taijasa*, but I hold that the ten senses are *vaikārika*, etc.'; the other commentators explain as above. But elsewhere the same purāṇa preserves the memory of another,—and in view of our above remarks undoubtedly older—, order in 1, 15, 19 f.:

prathamo mahataḥ sargo vijñeyo brahmaṇas tu saḥ //
tanmātrāṇāṃ dvitīyaś ca bhūtasargo hi sa smṛtaḥ /
vaikārikas tṛtīyas tu sarga aindriyakaḥ smṛtaḥ //

'it should be known that the first evolution is that of the *mahat*; this evolution proceeds from Brahmā. The second evolution is that of the *tanmātras*; this one is known as the creation of the elements. The third evolution is that of the senses; this one is the *vaikārika*.' This is certainly an ancient order of evolution: *brahmā* → *mahat* → *bhūtas* → senses, which clearly corresponds to that of MBh. 12, 291 without *ahaṃkāra*.